

VAN NUYS VALLEY NEWS (CA)  
29 May 1980

Secrecy gone from intelligence gathering

# Official: Stop crippling the CIA

Daniel B. Silver, general counsel for the Central Intelligence Agency, said Wednesday in Los Angeles intelligence activities "must be kept secret" as he urged an end to "our national period of self-flagellation."

Silver urged a new national attitude toward such agencies as the CIA, saying that "we cannot openly acknowledge them and subject them to external oversight, and at the same time treat them as if they were moral lepers."

During his lunch talk to the International Club at the World Trade Center, Silver reviewed the recent history of the nation's intelligence activities and congressional and executive constraints placed on them.

While he acknowledged that congressional and administrative oversight of CIA activities is advisable, he warned that "this extraordinary process of publicly debating and defining the parameters of our activities has not been without its costs."

"It has given the Soviets and other hostile powers propaganda possibilities which they have exploited extensively ... (and) we no doubt lost a certain amount of respect and confidence among friendly individuals and governments abroad."

Friendly nations, he said, "think that the way we have been dealing with intelligence over the last several years is at best silly and at worst suicidal."

While intelligence activities must be regulated and overseen, Silver said, "they must also be kept secret. Secrecy is the lifeblood of survival for an intelligence organization."

Without secrecy, Silver insisted, organizations like the CIA would be "rendered totally ineffective."

"Our national period of self-flagellation caused by Vietnam War guilt and Watergate mistrust ... should come to an end," Silver said.